

REMARKS

The applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough examination of the application and request reexamination and reconsideration of the application in view of the following remarks.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-35 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. App. Publ. No. 2004/0151865 to *Howland* in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,357,726 to *Effenberger et al.*

Each of the Examiner's rejections is based in whole or in part on *Howland*, which has a filing date of January 23, 2004 and which claims priority to provisional application No. 60/442,104 filed on January 23, 2003.

According to the Affidavit Under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 attached hereto with Exhibits, signed by each of the inventors, the invention claimed in the subject application was conceived of prior to January 23, 2003.

Accordingly, the applicants respectfully submit that because the applicants' claimed invention was conceived of prior to January 23, 2003, the filing date of the *Howland* reference, that *Howland* is not a proper reference. Additionally, because *Howland* serves as the basis for the rejections of each of the pending claims, either in whole or in part, the applicants request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections based on *Howland*.

CONCLUSION

Each of Examiner's rejections has been addressed or traversed. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1-35 based on *Howland*. Early and favorable action is respectfully requested.

If for any reason this Response is found to be incomplete, or if at any time it appears that

a telephone conference with counsel would help advance prosecution, please telephone the undersigned or his associates, collect in Waltham, Massachusetts at (781) 890-5678.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Thomas E. Thompson, Jr.
Reg. No. 47,136